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BOOK REVIEWS

Forschungen über gleichgeschlechtliche Liebe. Von F. KARSCH-HAACK. I. Band. *Das gleichgeschlechtliche Leben der Ostasiaten : Chinesen Japaner Koreer.* München : Seitz & Schauer, 1906. 8°, ix, 134 pp.

This is a most scholarly production by an assiduous worker, a deep thinker, and a genial philanthropist. In the *Jahrbuch für sexuelle Zwischenstufen* (vol. III, 1901, pp. 72-201) the author, who is a Privatdocent in the University of Berlin, discussed the occurrence of pederasty and tribadism among primitive tribes, pointing out the existence of homosexual individuals among the Negroes, Malaysians, American Indians, and Arctic peoples. In this new treatise the Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans are dealt with from the same point of view ; in a second volume he proposes to treat of the Hamites, Semites, and the culture nations of America, while the Aryans will occupy the third and fourth volumes.

The leading thought of these investigations is, as stated in the preface (p. ix), that the above-named phenomena as effects of sexual impulse are not "vices," but manifestations always and everywhere appearing which are deserving neither of contempt nor social ostracism or brutal persecution by law, and that accordingly among single races and peoples they do not differ essentially or in principle, but in the characteristic forms of their occurrences there are variations corresponding to the ethnic traits of the peoples. Students of East-Asiatic cultures will feel greatly indebted to the author for the present volume, which represents a new and most interesting contribution to our knowledge of the culture of the Chinese and Japanese, with much new light on their innermost thoughts. It is undoubtedly a valuable character study of these peoples. The sources available for such a study are utilized with remarkable completeness, with conscientiousness and sound critical acumen. With regard to Chinese historical data which are quoted from sources that are now antiquated, and the spelling of proper names, the author would have done well to consult a sinologue ; it is impossible to determine, for example, what person the emperor "Qua-Tschesi" (p. 11) is.

The reviewer, who essays an appreciation of this book merely in the attitude of a student of culture, openly admits that its subject proper, in its physiological and medical aspects, is entirely foreign to him ; with that reserve becoming his ignorance of the matter, he ventures to say that in

the chapter on China a clear distinction seems to him not to have always been drawn between really homosexual persons and occasional homosexual actions of otherwise normal individuals, such as was doubtless the case, for example, of the Emperor K'ien-lung, for one can by no means stamp him as a homosexual, as it is known from history that he left five sons.

From his consideration of homosexual life in China, which is organized in all forms, developed in all degrees, and spread over all classes of society, the author formulates the conclusion that pederasty cannot palpably weaken the vitality of an otherwise healthy nation nor check the progressive increase of the population — that it cannot be the expression of the decadence of a people. The vital force, the power of resistance, and tenacity of Chinese culture, and the extent of the population would speak eloquently against any assumption to the contrary. What, from our prejudiced and narrow point of view, we call prostitution, in China and Japan is a fundamentally different institution, and a juster understanding of it is attempted by Karsch (p. 69).

The history of the sexual relations of the Japanese is the more interesting portion of the book, as in the treatment of this many more sources are available; indeed, the Japanese themselves have revealed to us so many features of their sexual life. The author believes he is able to prove, by the testimony of history, law, literature, and art, that in Japan there was a period of natural, naïve, and unscrupulous practice and cultivation of mutual men-love which has been artificially suppressed only since the latter part of the nineteenth century under the influence of Occidental ideas. No law ever stood in the way of pederasty. In the famous codification of the Hundred Laws of Iyeyasu (seventeenth century) by the first Shōgun of the Tokugawa family (doubtless the greatest personality whom Japan has ever produced) the intercourse of men and women is set forth as the fundamental law of human society, and marriage is recommended to all who have transgressed the sixteenth year of age. This common sense in natural things, however, did not shield the great legislator from the sober and objective judgment of others who deviated from the norm established by him. Article 86 of his code runs: "Male and female prostitutes, dancing-girls and persons roving about at night are unavoidable in towns and flourishing places of the country. Although the habits of men are often impaired by this, yet greater vileness would come forth if severe prohibitions were issued. But games at dice, intoxication, and sexual debauchery must be strictly forbidden." From the tenor of this it is unambiguously evident (according to Karsch) that the legislator regarded intercourse with boys and sexual dissolution as entirely

distinct things, and wanted them viewed in a different light. Japanese fiction is replete in descriptions of homosexual relations, the most prominent work being the "Great Mirror of Man-Affection," by the novelist Ibara Saikaku (1687), which is said to be an unvarnished realistic production not devoid of deeper sentiments nor of poetic beauty, and in all events a mine for the culture study of the Japanese people. About 1830 there appeared a catalogue enumerating no fewer than 177 Japanese works on pederastic subjects (p. 118). I fully concur with the author in his judgment on that branch of Japanese painting branded as "obscene" by the ordinary philistine spirit (p. 106), on that art of the nude which is certainly nothing but an outlet for the overflowing joy of life and sound sensuality unfettered by disguise and hypocrisy.

The Samurai, the military nobility, were in the habit of keeping fine young boys or youths in addition to their wives. Now, it is a curious fact that Satsuma was anciently and still is the center of pederasty, and it is also true that the bravest and most warlike people come from this province and clan of Satsuma. Lovers of boys are said there to be manlier than lovers of women. Until 1868 there was in Satsuma a law forbidding, under penalty of death, young men under 30 years of age to touch a woman. This law, remarks Karsch, was due to the fact that the population of Satsuma forms an exceedingly warlike tribe, ten to twenty thousand men of which were permanently at war and must have been concerned about the fidelity of their wives at home, had not the impotency of the youthful male progeny thus been checked. This can hardly be the true reason, but is merely the subsequent reflection of the Japanese on the subject. The actual Samurai idea which endeavored to deter young men from seeking women under this formidable threat was rather to drive them intentionally to homosexual intercourse. On this point and these conditions in general on the island of Kiushu the present writer has direct information from Japanese who lived there, and he may thus, for the rest, confirm the report of the author. Eye-witnesses assert that pederasty is still widely prevalent in the army and navy, being an inheritance from the Samurai; and it is said to have contributed not a little to the successes in the war against Russia. Though this may seem to be asserting too much, it cannot be denied that the military spirit of Japan was an essential factor in the cultivation of specific forms of manly relations; certainly it was not the cause of them, which remains as mysterious to Japan as to all other countries.

Considering the investigations of Karsch, there can be no doubt that homosexuality is an ethnological problem worthy the attention and re-

flection of the student of anthropology, though it is from the anthropological point of view that it is difficult for the reviewer to subscribe to all the opinions and judgments of the author. First of all, one is not inclined to believe that he has succeeded in entirely proving that these phenomena were ever regarded by the Japanese as perfectly natural up to the period of the restoration. This is such a far-reaching statement, of such paramount anthropological and psychological importance, and it would represent such an extraordinary case, that it deserves some discussion. Strangely enough, Karsch himself furnishes the material from which just the reverse of his thesis may be deduced. He thinks (p. 77) that the first allusion to pederasty in Japanese literature is found in the *Nihongi* (completed A.D. 720), in the annals of the empress Jingō, under the designation "atsunahi no tsumi," which he translates by "Vergehen der Männerliebe," referring to Hepburn's *Japanese-English Dictionary* as giving the meanings "crime, trespass," etc., for *tsumi*, but unfortunately, as he remarks, no information regarding *atsunahi*. But on what authority his own translation rests, the author does not state, although he quotes the whole passage in which this expression occurs from Aston's excellent and well-known version of the *Nihongi*, in which the correct interpretation is given. To make the whole case intelligible to the reader, and by reason of the importance of this alleged first historical reference to pederasty in Japan, we quote literally this interesting story from Aston's *Nihongi* (I, 238):

"Prince Oshikuma, again withdrawing his troops, retreated as far as Uji, where he encamped. The Empress proceeded southwards to the land of Kii, and met the Prince Imperial at Hitaka. Having consulted with her ministers, she at length desired to attack Prince Oshikuma, and removed to the Palace of Shinu. It so happened that at this time the day was dark like night. Many days passed in this manner, and the men of that time said:— 'This is the Eternal Night.' The Empress inquired of Toyomimi, the ancestor of the Atahe of Ki, saying: 'Wherefore is this omen?' Then there was an old man who said: 'I have heard by tradition that this kind of omen is called Atsunahi no tsumi [Aston's note: "The calamity of there being no sun"].' She inquired: 'What does it mean?' He answered and said:— 'The priests (hafuri) of the two shrines have been buried together.' Therefore she made strict investigation in the village. There was a man who said:— 'The priest of Shinu and the priest of Amano were good friends. The priest of Shinu fell ill, and died. The priest of Amano wept and wailed, saying:— 'We have been friends together since our birth. Why in our death should there not be the same grave for both?' So he lay down beside the corpse and died of himself, so that they were buried together. This is perhaps the

reason.' So they opened the tomb, and on examination found that it was true. Therefore they again changed their coffins and interred them separately, upon which the sunlight shone forth, and there was a difference between day and night.'

Atsunahi, or *atsunai*, is an archaic Japanese term, *atsu* meaning 'hot' and poetically used for 'sun' in compounds only, *nai* being the negative copula ('not to be'). Aston's explanation, "the calamity of there being no sun," or plainly a solar eclipse, is quite appropriate, while that of Karsch is arbitrary. But, assuming the latter to be correct, he has placed himself in the position of sawing off the very branch of the tree on which he sits, for if in this tradition intercourse between men be considered a crime—a crime of such an extent as to cause the sun to darken—it shatters his theory of an original natural concept of homosexual acts in Japan and would prove that in ancient Japan such acts were condemned. I should even go so far as to say that an unbiased mind could not find in this tradition a hint at those relations which our author infers from it. The plain words of the text do not bear out his interpretation. All that is said is that the two priests had been good friends from childhood, and it is only in their burial in a common grave that the abnormality of the case comes to cause its connection with a contemporaneous eclipse of the sun. Surely if Karsch's conception of a sexual intercourse and his reading into the text "*Vergehen der Männerliebe*" were correct, the whole story would be inconsistent. Why, if there is here the question of the "crime of man love," is not the sun made to disappear during the lifetime of the men, as would be most logical, instead of so doing only after their death? It is quite evident that it is only the unusual entombment of the two men that forms the keynote of the tradition. In this case it is not conducive to the evidence of homosexuality in ancient Japan.

Yet again (p. 97) we are told that in the *Norito*, the ancient rituals of Shintō, homosexual intercourse is not mentioned as a crime or sin, although sodomy is expressly named, which seems most noteworthy to our author, who thinks it would be inconsiderate to infer from this that pederasty had then been unknown. The passage to which he alludes may now be conveniently read in Aston's recent book on Shintō (London, 1905, p. 300). There is no evidence to show that ancient Shintō, either in an official or an unofficial form, ever sanctioned or tolerated pederasty, and if it did not condemn it, nothing can be followed from this regarding the existence or non-existence of such a custom. Shintō had very little, if any, concern with sexual relations; nor did it pronounce a verdict on

adultery (see Aston, p. 91), although this does not prove that it was in silent sympathy with it.

As this is all the evidence gathered by Karsch from the ancient Japanese sources, it cannot be said that what he seeks to prove is valid for this early period; and I am inclined to think that it did not then exist, at least not so manifestly as to attract public attention. And here an *argumentum ex silentio* seems to be somewhat conclusive, as all sexual relations are spoken of otherwise with unveiled naïveté and play an important part in the *Kōjiki*, the most ancient records of Japan. Now, if Karsch will make one believe that pederasty is inborn, so to speak, and hence natural to the Japanese, why does it not manifest itself in some form in the most natural productions of the *Kōjiki*? I am far from disbelieving that at a certain period and among certain classes of people it was practised as a thing seemingly and perhaps effectively natural to them: all that we hear and read about it in regard to the class of Samurai makes indeed the striking, not to say appalling, impression of naturalness and ingenuity. This state of naturalness however is apparently a secondary development, and not by any means the original idea, as emphasized by our author; it is a subsequent thought gradually bred and traditionally taught and handed down by the Samurai, and, we may admit, also by the celibate Buddhist priests. Even from the law of Iyeyasu it follows that the legislator only tolerated the practice, not that he approved of it. It is not too much to say that there is hardly a country under the sun that follows such sound principles and enjoys such wholesome conditions in matters of sexual intercourse as Japan, from which the hypocritical white world could learn many a lesson looking to the regeneration of its rusty morals, and that it is just this art of conforming to matter-of-fact living that the unique genius and exceptional greatness of Japan is due.

We do not deny any facts conscientiously recorded by Karsch concerning homosexual life; we fully believe in them, but we desire to accentuate that which he utterly neglects to state, that also in Japan they form the exception to the rule, and, offset by normal sexual conditions, they lose much of the magnification to which they appear to be subjected when viewed individually, and when severed from a universal consideration of the ruling ties of love.

It further seems to me that we are not justified in saying, with Karsch, that the sudden reaction and legal measures taken by the Japanese government against pederasty in recent times are due solely to the influence of Western methods. It is true that these clauses of the Japanese penal

code breathe the same spirit as corresponding ones in our criminal law and follow almost the same tenor ; but it would mean to dispossess the Japanese lawyers of the freedom of the psychological motive by imputing to them the "forcible suppression of native genius," as Karsch puts it, through the imposing of a merely foreign law upon their people. There are many sections in our penal code that did not find an echo in that of the Japanese, owing to the entire lack of an actual basis for them in their environment. But the adoption of the clause against "unnatural offenses" sufficiently shows that the modern legislators of Japan were guided, and could not but have been guided, by a psychological motive in the reception of this law, which is to say that they were *not* led by the idea of that naïve and natural feeling toward this matter which our author tends to insinuate was the case with the mass of the Japanese. And this is further strong ground for our view that this natural concept of homosexuality was not general, but was restricted to certain classes to whom it was secondarily instilled by tradition and education.

Here we must touch upon another weak side of the book. In his laudable attempt to do justice to a widely misunderstood question, Karsch looks disdainfully on all tendencies and powers opposing homosexuality ; but he does not try to analyze or explain this antagonism. It is true that the homosexual individual has a claim to justice and to objective, impartial judgment. The phenomenon itself is an inexplicable enigma, and its world-wide propagation in ancient and modern times renders it all the more difficult of solution. Aside from this universality we can not, by way of purely scientific reasoning, attribute to it any other descriptive term than that it is *abnormal*, according to our present knowledge. To say that it is unnatural is certainly a fallacy, first, because everything occurring in natural, i. e., in human or nature, life, is implicitly natural, and, secondly, because the favorite conclusion, "it is against my nature, consequently against nature," is illusionary and deceptive of one's self. But these intellectual deductions cannot blind our eyes to the existence of certain emotions which dominate the soul of the individual as well as the life of the peoples of the globe. It is evident beyond cavil that all men and all women of normal sexual sentiment have an innate aversion to all abnormal sexual practice, and particularly to homosexuality, and as certain as the existence of the latter is, so certain also is the psychological abyss separating heterosexuals and homosexuals. This is not only a psychological but also an anthropological fact, and accordingly an anthropological problem for investigation, as it pervades all mankind ; for it cannot be mere coincidence that the laws of primitive

and of civilized peoples alike make provisions against abnormal intercourse.¹ The general animosity of law toward homosexuals is the crystallization of social and ethnic sentiment, and to study the foundations and reasons of this sentiment among peoples is one of the great requirements of anthropology. Certainly the question whether this sentiment is objectively justified or not, does not concern us as anthropologists, but moves along an entirely different line. This is also the reason why I believe that Mr Karsch, despite his noble efforts, will convince or convert few readers to his beliefs, which seem to culminate in the idea that homosexuality has the same privilege of existence as heterosexuality, a deduction which the majority cannot accept by reason of just those uncanny elementary ethnic emotional thoughts that haunt us common normal individuals, and which Mr Karsch, not being an anthropologist, is prone to stamp with such commonplace terms as prejudice and ignorance.

However all this may be, and how far our opinions may differ, it does not belittle the great value of Karsch's serious and thorough work, which deserves the widest attention of all thinking anthropologists.

B. LAUFER.

Sex and Society. Studies in the Social Psychology of Sex. BY WILLIAM I. THOMAS. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1907. 12°, 366 pp.

This book is chiefly a collection of special articles published from time to time in periodicals. The chapter headings are: Organic Differences in the Sexes, Sex and Primitive Social Control, Sex and Social Feeling, Sex and Primitive Industry, Sex and Primitive Morality, The Psychology of Exogamy, The Psychology of Modesty and Clothing, The Adventitious Character of Woman, The Mind of Woman and the Lower Races.

The general anabolic and katabolic conception of the sexes is accepted by the author at the start as the organic basis of society. While this is now the traditional view in biology and sociology, the author presents arguments in support of this sex antithesis as expressed in psychic and social activities. On the social side the male is considered as unsocial, or disposed to wander about detached, while the female because of her association with children forms the nucleus of a social group. In a general way the theory of maternal descent is accepted, but the author rejects the idea that promiscuity is implied in such a condition for the tie binding the woman and the children is a real, if not the real, social bond. However, the ever prevailing tendency toward male social authority is considered

¹ See, e. g., Post, *Grundriss der ethnologischen Jurisprudenz*, II, pp. 390-392.